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MRS. DELANY'S
LETTERS.

Printed by A. and R. Spottiswoode,
Printers-Street, London.

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Mary Delany,
Aged 87 Years and 5 Months.

LETTERS

FROM

MRS. DELANY

(WIDOW OF DOCTOR PATRICK DELANY,)

TO

MRS. FRANCES HAMILTON,

FROM THE YEAR 1779, TO THE YEAR 1788;

COMPRISING

MANY UNPUBLISHED AND INTERESTING

ANECDOTES OF THEIR LATE MAJESTIES

AND THE ROYAL FAMILY.

NOW FIRST PRINTED FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS.

Little circumstances show the real Men, better
than things of greater moment. ADDISON.

THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1821.

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PRÉFATORY NOTICE.

THE Letters now given to the public, were written by Mrs. Delany, the widow of Doctor Patrick Delany, well known as the friend and intimate of Swift, and as a literary character of some celebrity. After the death of Doctor Delany, Mrs. Delany resided chiefly with the Duchess Dowager of Portland (mother of the late Duke), and, during her residence at Bulstrode, was introduced to the notice of our late venerated Sovereign and his Queen, whose acquaintance with her soon ripened into a friendship, which lasted till Mrs. Delany's death, and was equally honourable to the illustrious persons who conferred it, as to the venerable and

excellent object of their unremitting kindness. At a moment like this, when the recent loss of our beloved Monarch has excited interest towards every circumstance illustrative of his private life and character, it is thought that these letters, unaffectedly displaying the domestic happiness that reigned at Windsor Castle, and recording many traits which do honour to the head and the heart of the Sovereign and of his Consort, would not prove uninteresting to the public. Who, indeed, would not rejoice to learn that “*true happiness*,” characterised by a great author * as “arising from the enjoyment of one’s self, and from the friendship and conversation of a few select companions,” should have so eminently existed, where least likely to be found; in the centre of a Court, on the very throne of the greatest and most powerful empire of Europe.

Many of the anecdotes will, perhaps, be thought by some readers too trivial and unimportant for public notice: did they concern pri-

* Addison.

vate individuals the objection would be readily admitted; but the most trifling circumstance acquires dignity and interest, when it refers to departed worth and greatness; and the mind dwells with more satisfaction upon the recollection of George the Third, as the exemplary character in every social relation of life, than it does upon the splendour of his regal state. Critical accuracy may detect some careless phraseology, and even grammatical inaccuracies, which might easily have been corrected in preparing the letters for the press; but it was thought advisable to leave them in their original unpretending, unstudied form; and the internal *evidence* they bear of the *sincerity* and *truth* in which they were written, will, perhaps, give them greater interest, than often is derived from more correct or even elaborate compositions.

Some passages, referring to private transactions, and which would have been wholly uninteresting to the public, have been expunged. The excellent person to whom these letters (with the exception of the first,) were addressed,

had, some time previous to her death *, expressed a wish that they should be published. It was, therefore, in contemplation to produce them immediately after the demise of Her late Majesty; but circumstances arose, which prevented the fulfilment of that intention. At the present moment however, it is hoped, they will appear as acceptable as they could have been at any former period.

An authentic, but brief article concerning the writer, Mrs. Delany, is subjoined, and the tributary eulogiums upon her taste, talents, and character, from illustrious contemporaries, which are added, will serve to bring the reader in some degree acquainted with this amiable lady, who seems to have been equally esteemed and admired by every person acquainted with her; and as much beloved by the young for her cheerful benevolence, as by those of maturer years for the piety of her heart, the soundness of her understanding, and the polished charms of her society.

* Which occurred in March, 1819.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

MARY DELANY, a lady of distinguished ingenuity and merit, was born in a small country-house of her father's, at Coulton in Wiltshire, May 14. 1700. She was the daughter of Barnard Granville, and niece of George, afterwards Lord Granville, a nobleman, whose abilities and virtues, whose character as a poet, whose friendship with Pope, Swift, and other eminent writers of the time, and whose general patronage of men of genius and literature, have often been recorded in biographical productions. As the child of such a family, she could not fail of receiving the best education. It was at Long Leat, the seat of the Weymouth family, which

was occupied by Lord Lansdowne during the minority of the heir of that family, that Miss Granville first saw Alexander Pendarves, Esq. a gentleman of large property, at Roscrow in Cornwall, and who immediately paid his addresses to her, which were so strenuously supported by her uncle, whom she had not the courage to deny, that she gave a reluctant consent to the match; and accordingly it took place in the compass of two or three weeks, she being then in the seventeenth year of her age. From a great disparity of years, and other causes, she was very unhappy during the time which this connection lasted, but endeavoured to make the best of her situation. The retirement to which she was confined was wisely employed in the farther cultivation of a naturally vigorous understanding; and the good use she made of her leisure hours was eminently evinced in the charms of her conversation, and in her letters to her friends. That quick feeling of the elegant and beautiful which constitutes *taste*, she possessed in an eminent degree, and was therefore peculiarly fitted for succeeding in the fine arts. At the period we are speaking of, she made a

great proficiency in music ; but painting, which afterwards she most loved, and in which she principally excelled, had not yet engaged her practical attention. In 1724, Mrs. Pendarves became a widow, upon which occasion she quitted Cornwall, and fixed her principal residence in London. For several years, between 1730 and 1736, she maintained a correspondence with Dr. Swift. In 1743, Mrs. Pendarves was married to Dr. Delany, with whom it appears she had long been acquainted, and for whom she had many years entertained a very high esteem. She had been a widow nineteen years when this connection, which was a very happy one, took place, and her husband is said to have regarded her almost to adoration. Upon his decease in May, 1768, she intended to fix herself at Bath, and was in quest of a house for that purpose. But the Duchess Dowager of Portland, hearing of her design, went down to the place, and having in her early years formed an intimacy with Mrs. Delany, wished to have near her a lady from whom she had necessarily, for several years, been much separated, and whose heart and talents she

knew, would, in the highest degree, add to the happiness of her own life. Her Grace succeeded in her solicitations; and Mrs. Delany now passed her time between London and Bulstrode. On the death of the Duchess Dowager of Portland, His Majesty*, who had frequently seen and honoured Mrs. Delany with his notice at Bulstrode, assigned her for her summer residence the use of a house completely furnished, in St. Alban's Street, Windsor, adjoining to the entrance of the Castle; and that the having two houses on her hands might not produce any inconvenience with regard to the expense of her living, His Majesty, as a farther mark of his royal favour, conferred on her a pension of three hundred pounds a year. On the 15th of April, 1788, after a short indisposition, she departed this life, at her house in St. James's Place, having nearly completed the eighty-eighth year of her age. The circumstance that has principally entitled Mrs. Delany to a place in this work, is her skill in painting, and in other ingenious arts, one of

* George the Third.

which was entirely her own. With respect to painting, she was late in her application to it. She did not learn to draw till she was more than thirty years of age, when she put herself under the instruction of Goupy, a fashionable master of that time, and much employed by Frederick Prince of Wales. To oil painting she did not take till she was past forty. So strong was her passion for this art, that she has frequently been known to employ herself in it, day after day, from six o'clock in the morning till dinner-time, allowing only a short interval for breakfast. She was principally a copyist; but a very fine one. The only considerable original work of hers in oil, was the raising of Lazarus, in the possession of her friend Lady Bute. The number of pictures painted by her, considering how late it was in life before she applied to the art, was very great. Her own house was full of them; and others are among the chief ornaments of Calswich, Welsbourn, and Ilam, the respective residences of her nephews, Mr. Granville and Mr. Dewes, and of her niece, Mrs. Port. Mrs. Delany, among her other accomplishments,

excelled in embroidery and shell-work; and in the course of her life, produced many elegant specimens of her skill in these respects. But, what is more remarkable, at the age of seventy-four she invented a new and beautiful mode of exercising her ingenuity. This was by the construction of a FLORA, of a most singular kind, formed by applying coloured papers together, and which might not improperly be called a species of mosaic work. Being perfectly mistress of her scissars, the plant or flower which she purposed to imitate she cut out; that is, she cut out its various leaves and parts, in such coloured Chinese paper as suited her subject: and, when she could not meet with a colour to correspond with the one she wanted, she dyed her own paper to answer her wishes. She used a black ground, as best calculated to throw out her flower; and not the least astonishing part of her art, was, that though she never employed her pencil to trace out the form or shape of her plant, yet when she had applied all the pieces which composed it, it hung so loosely, and gracefully, that every one was persuaded it must previously

have been drawn out, and repeatedly corrected by a most judicious hand, before it could have attained the ease, and air of truth which, without any impeachment of the honours of this accomplished lady, might justly be called a forgery of nature's works. The effect was superior to what painting could have produced; and so imposing was her art, that she would sometimes put a real leaf of a plant by the side of one of her own creation, which the eye could not detect, even when she herself pointed it out. Mrs. Delany continued in the prosecution of her design till the eighty-third year of her age, when the dimness of her sight obliged her to lay it aside. However, by her unwearied perseverance, she became authoress of far the completest FLORA that ever was executed by the same hand. The number of plants finished by her amounted to nine hundred and eighty. This invaluable FLORA was bequeathed by her to her nephew, Court Dewes, Esq. and is now in the possession of Barnard Dewes, Esq. of Welsbourn, in Warwickshire. The liberality of Mrs. Delany's mind rendered her at all times ready to communicate her

art. She frequently pursued her work in company; was desirous of showing to her friends how easy it was to execute, and was often heard to lament that so few would attempt it. It required, however, great patience and great knowledge in botanical drawing. She began to write poetry at eighty years of age, and her verses show at least a pious disposition: at this time she wrote and prefixed the following lines to the first volume of her *FLORA, OR HERBAL*:

“ Hail to the happy times when fancy led
“ My pensive mind the flowery path to tread,
“ And gave me emulation to presume,
“ With timid art, to trace fair Nature’s bloom;
“ To view with awe the great creative Power
“ That shines confest in the minutest flower;
“ With wonder to pursue the glorious line
“ And gratefully adore the hand divine.”

Her private character is thus given by her friend, Mr. Keate: — “ She had every virtue
“ that could adorn the human heart, with a
“ mind so pure, and so uncontaminated by the
“ world, that it was matter of astonishment
“ how she could have lived in its more splendid

“ scenes, without being tainted with one sin-
“ gle atom of its folly or indiscretion. The
“ strength of her understanding received, in the
“ fullest degree, its polish, but its weakness
“ never reached her. Her life was conducted
“ by the sentiments of true piety; her way of
“ thinking, on every occasion, was upright
“ and just; her conversation was lively, plea-
“ sant, and instructive. She was warm, delicate,
“ and sincere in her friendships; full of phi-
“ lanthropy and benevolence, and loved and
“ respected by every person who had the
“ happiness to know her. That sunshine and
“ serenity of mind which the good only can
“ enjoy, and which had thrown so much attrac-
“ tion on her life, remained without a shadow
“ to the last; not less bright in its setting,
“ than in its meridian lustre. That form which
“ in youth had claimed admiration, in age
“ challenged respect. It presented a noble
“ ruin, become venerable by the decay of time,
“ Her faculties remained unimpaired to the
“ last; and she quitted this mortal state, to re-
“ ceive in a better world, the Crown of a well-
“ spent life.”

Mrs. Delany was buried in a vault belonging to St. James's Church; and on one of its columns a stone is erected to her memory, with an inscription; which, after reciting her name, descent, marriages, age, &c. concludes as follows: — “ She was a lady of singular ingenuity
 “ and politeness, and of unaffected piety. These
 “ qualities had endeared her through life to
 “ many noble and excellent persons, and made
 “ the close of it illustrious, by procuring for
 “ her many signs of grace and favour from
 “ Their Majesties.”

*From the general Biographical Dictionary: by
 Alexander Chalmers, vol. xi. p. 415 to 419.*

Mr. Gilpin, when he visited Bulstrode, in 1776, was shown Mrs. Delany's Herbal; of which he observes. — “ She has executed a great
 “ number of plants and flowers, both natives
 “ and exotics, not only with exact delineation,
 “ and almost in their full lustre of colour, but
 “ in great taste; and, what is the most extraordinary, her only materials are bits of
 “ paper of different colours.

“ In the progress of her work, she pulls the

“ flower in pieces, examines anatomically the
 “ structure of its leaves, stems, and buds; and
 “ having cut her papers to the shape of the
 “ several parts, she puts them together, giv-
 “ ing them a richness and consistence, by
 “ laying one piece over another, and often a
 “ transparent piece over part of a shade, which
 “ softens it. Very rarely she gives any colour
 “ with a brush. — She pastes them, as she
 “ works, upon a black ground, which, at first,
 “ I thought rather injured them, as a mid-
 “ dle tint would have given more strength to
 “ the shade; but I doubt whether it would
 “ have answered its effect. These flowers have
 “ both the beauty of painting and the exact-
 “ ness of botany; and the work, I have no
 “ doubt, into whatever hands it may hereafter
 “ fall, will be long considered as a great curi-
 “ osity.”

*Observations relating to Picturesque Beauty
 in the Highlands of Scotland, vol. ii. p. 190.*

Doctor Burney, the animated and ingenious
 author of the General History of Music,

having received from Mrs. Delany some interesting anecdotes concerning a celebrated person mentioned in that work, takes the opportunity of thus eulogizing her. —

“ The following anecdotes communicated to
“ me in 1787 by the late venerable Mrs. Delany,
“ will doubtless be read with confidence and
“ pleasure, not only by such as had the hap-
“ piness of knowing her personally, but by all
“ those to whom rumour has conveyed a faith-
“ ful account of her longevity, virtues, and
“ accomplishments: for this excellent person,
“ having been allowed by Providence to ex-
“ tend her existence to the great age of eighty-
“ eight, in the constant enjoyment of all the
“ felicity which the friendship and admiration
“ of rank, virtue, and talents could bestow; it
“ seems as if, without hyperbole, she may be
“ said to have been beloved by God and Man.”

General History of Music, vol. iv. p. 246.

ON MRS. DELANY'S ENTERING INTO THE
EIGHTIETH YEAR OF HER AGE.

*By Mrs. Walsingham.**

URG'D by my hopes; check'd by my fears,
I scarce dare wish you *many* years;
But that they all may *happy* prove,
Agrees with reason and with love.
With reason, that a mind so pure,
Stands on the verge of life secure,
Whether with heartfelt satisfaction,
Reviewing many a generous action,
You trace a life, which best can tell
To women, how they may excel;
Or looking on, with hopes elate,
Beyond this life's uncertain state,
You, with triumphant joy, descry
Those blest abodes prepar'd on high,
For spirits, perfect and refin'd;
There only you will equals find!

* Charlotte, daughter and co-heiress of Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, married the Hon. Robert Boyle (fifth son of Henry, first Earl of Shannon), who assumed the name of Walsingham on the death of his brother Henry Boyle Walsingham.

Oh, could you leave to those below,
 (As once a prophet did, you know)
 A mantle blest, that might impart
 Some of your virtues to the heart ;
 Fill with your sentiments the mind,
 And deck them with your sense refin'd ;
 How would I strive that robe to share
 For the dear object * of my care !
 Nor rob fair Portia † of her due,
 Believe me, there's enough for two.

The following Lines are from the pen of the celebrated Mrs. Hannah More.

(Written before the year 1788.)

DELANY shines in worth serenely bright,
 Wisdom's strong ray, and virtue's milder light ;
 And she who bless'd the friend, and graced the page
 Of Swift, still lends her lustre to our age.
 Long, long protract thy light, oh star benign,
 Whose setting beams with added brightness shine !

* Miss Boyle, Mrs. Walsingham's daughter.

† Mrs. Delany's niece.

Doctor Darwin, the admired author of the Botanic Garden, has the following passage, descriptive of Mrs. Delany's Paper Mosaics.

So now *Delany* forms her mimic bowers,
Her paper foliage and her silken flowers ;
Her virgin train the tender scissors ply,
Vein the green leaf, the purple petal dye ;
Round wiry stems the flaxen tendril bends,
Moss creeps below, and waxen fruit impends.
Cold winter views, amid his realms of snow,
Delany's vegetable statutes blow ;
Smooths his stern brow, delays his hoary wing,
And eyes with wonder all the bloom of spring.

I have obey'd your commands and
am now only able to say that I and all
belonging to me are pretty well The L^{dy} Dow
of Portland desires her best compliments
mine to all Friends ever y^r A. Dilsey
Bathwick

28 June 1779
The L^{dy} of Portland's bids me add that she is wish'd on my
sending you this letter for a Quack seized me & I would
have drunk it.



LETTER I.

*To the Hon. Mrs. Hamilton *, Summer Hill,
Dublin.*

Bulstrode, June 28. 1779.

WHAT a task you have set me, my dear friend; I can no more tell you the particulars of all the honours I received last autumn from the King and Queen, and eight of their royal progeny, than I can remember last year's clouds, — a simile, by-the-by, ill adapted to the grace and benignity of their manners, that gave a lustre,

* Dorothea, daughter of James Forth, Esq. of Redwood, and widow of the Hon. and Rev. Francis Hamilton, son of James Earl of Abercorn.

even to Bulstrode, superior as it is to most places. I had formed to myself a very different idea of such visitors, and wished the day over; but their affability and good humour left no room for any thing but admiration and respect: for, with the most obliging condescension, there was no want of proper dignity to keep the balance even. They were delighted with the place, but above all with the mistress* of it, whose sweetness of manners, and knowledge of propriety, engage all ranks. To give you a just notion of the entertainment, you should have a plan of the house, that I might lead you through the apartments; but imagine every thing that is elegant and delightful, and you will do more justice to the place and entertainment, than I can by my description.

The royal family (ten in all) came at twelve o'clock. The King drove the Queen in an open chaise, with a pair of white horses. The Prince of Wales and Prince Frederick rode on horseback, all with proper attendants, but no guards.

* Lady Margaret Cavendish Harley, Duchess Dowager of Portland.

Princess Royal and Lady Weymouth *, in a post-chaise; Princess Augusta, Princess Elizabeth, Prince Adolphus (about seven years old), and Lady Charlotte Finch †, in a coach; Prince William, Prince Edward, Duke of Montague ‡, and Bishop of Lichfield, in a coach: another coach, full of attendant gentlemen; amongst the number, Mr. Smelt §, whose character sets him above most men, and does great honour to the King, who calls him his friend, and has drawn him out of his solitude (the life he had chosen) to enjoy his conversation every leisure moment. These, with all their attendants in rank and file, made a splendid figure as they drove through the park, and round the court, up to the house. The day was as brilliant as could be wished, the 12th of August, the Prince of Wales's birth-day. The Queen was in a hat, and an Italian night-gown of purple lustring,

* The Lady Elizabeth Cavendish Bentinck, eldest daughter of the Duchess Dowager of Portland.

† Daughter of Daniel, seventh Earl of Winchilsea.

‡ George, last Duke of Montague: he died in 1790.

§ Formerly sub-governor to His R. H. the Prince of Wales: from which situation he retired on a Pension in the year 1771.

trimmed with silver gauze. She is graceful and genteel; the dignity and sweetness of her manner, the perfect propriety of every thing she says, or does, satisfies every body she honours with her distinction so much, that beauty is by no means wanting to make her perfectly agreeable; and though age and long retirement from court, made me feel timid on my being called to make my appearance, I soon found myself perfectly at ease; for the King's condescension and good humour took off all awe, but what one must have for so respectable a character (severely tried by his enemies at home, as well as abroad). The three Princesses were all in frocks; the King and all the men were in an uniform, blue and gold. They walked through the great apartments, which are in a line, and attentively observed every thing; the pictures in particular. I kept back in the drawing-room, and took that opportunity of sitting down; when Princess Royal returned to me, and said the Queen missed me in the train: I immediately obeyed the summons with my best alacrity. Her Majesty met me half-way, and seeing me hasten my

steps, called out to me, "Though I desired you to come, I did not desire you to run and fatigue yourself." They all returned to the great drawing-room, where there were only two armed chairs placed in the middle of the room for the King and Queen.—The King placed the Duchess Dowager of Portland in his chair, and walked about admiring the beauties of the place. Breakfast was offered—all prepared in a long gallery that runs the length of the great apartments (a suite of eight rooms and three closets). The King and all his royal children, and the rest of the train, chose to go to the gallery, where the well-furnished tables were set: one with tea, coffee, and chocolate; another with their proper accompaniments of eatables, rolls, cakes, &c.; another table with fruits and ices in the utmost perfection: which with a magical touch had succeeded a cold repast. The Queen remained in the drawing-room: I stood at the back of her chair, which happening to be one of my working, gave the Queen an opportunity of saying many flattering and obliging things. The Duchess Dowager of Portland brought Her Majesty a dish of

tea on a waiter, with biscuits, which was what she chose; after she had drank her tea, she would not return the cup to the Duchess, but got up and would carry it into the gallery herself, and was much pleased to see with what elegance every thing was prepared; no servants but those out of livery made their appearance. The gay and pleasant appearance they all made, and the satisfaction all expressed, rewarded the attention and politeness of the Duchess of Portland, who is never so happy as when she gratifies those she esteems worthy of her attention and favours. The young royals seemed quite happy, from the eldest to the youngest, and to inherit the gracious manners of their parents. I cannot enter upon their particular address to me, which not only did me honour, but showed their humane and benevolent respect for old age.

The King desired me to show the Queen one of my books of plants*: she seated herself in the gallery; a table and the book lay before

* See Biographical Sketch.

her. — I kept my distance till she called me to ask some questions about the mosaic paper work; and as I stood before Her Majesty, the King set a chair behind me. I turned with some confusion and hesitation, on receiving so great an honour, when the Queen said, “Mrs. Delany, sit down, sit down: it is not every lady that has a chair brought her by a King;” so I obeyed. Amongst many gracious things, the Queen asked me why I was not with the Duchess when she came; for I might be sure she would ask for me? I was flattered, though I knew to whom I was obliged for the distinction, (and doubly flattered by *that*.) I acknowledged it in as few words as possible, and said I was particularly happy at that time to pay my duty to Her Majesty, as it gave me an opportunity of seeing so many of the Royal Family, which age and obscurity had deprived me of. “Oh but,” says Her Majesty, “you have not seen *all* my children yet;” upon which the King came up and asked what we were talking about? which was repeated, and the King replied to the Queen, “you may put Mrs. Delany into the way of doing that, by naming a day for her

to drink tea at Windsor Castle. The Duchess of Portland was consulted, and the next day fixed upon, as the Duchess had appointed the end of the week for going to Weymouth.— We went at the hour appointed, seven o'clock, and were received in the lower private apartment at the Castle: went through a large room with great bay windows, where were all the Princesses and youngest Princes, with their attendant ladies and gentlemen. We passed on to the bedchamber, where the Queen stood in the middle of the room, with Lady Weymouth and Lady Charlotte Finch. (The King and the eldest Princes had walked out.) When the Queen took her seat, and the ladies their places, she ordered a chair to be set for me opposite to where she sat, and asked me if I felt any wind from the door or window?— It was indeed a sultry day.

At eight the King, &c. came into the room, with so much cheerfulness and good humour, that it was impossible to feel any painful restraint. It was the hour of the King and Queen and eleven of the Princes and Princesses' walking on the terrace. They apolo-

gised for going, but said the crowd expected them; but they left Lady Weymouth and the Bishop of Lichfield to entertain us in their absence; we sat in the bay-window, well pleased with our companions, and the brilliant show on the terrace, on which we looked; the band of music playing all the time under the window.— When they returned we were summoned into the next room to tea, and the Royals began a ball, and danced two country dances, to the music of French horns, bassoons, and hautboys, which were the same that played on the terrace. The King came up to the Prince of Wales and said he was sure, when he considered how great an effort it must be to play that kind of music so long a time together, that he would not continue their dancing there, but that the Queen and the rest of the company were going to the Queen's house, and they should renew their dancing there, and have proper music.

I can say no more:— I cannot describe the gay, the polished appearance of the Queen's house, furnished with English manufacture.— The Prince of Wales dances a minuet better

than any one I have seen for many years ; but what would please you more, could I do it justice, is the good sense and engaging address of one and all. I think I have great courage in having gone so far on this subject, knowing how you hate vanity and ostentation ; and I fear I have been guilty of both : but recollect how you pressed me to it, and let the tempter pardon the frailty she has encouraged ; and also the awkward half-sheet that begins this unreasonable narration. I have obeyed your commands, and am now only able to say, that I, and all belonging to me, are pretty well. The Duchess Dowager of Portland desires her best compliments ; — mine to all friends.

Ever yours,

M. DELANY.

The Duchess of Portland bids me add, that she insisted on my sending you this letter ; for a qualm seized me, and I would have sunk it.

LETTER II.

*To Mrs. Frances Hamilton, Summer-Hill,
Dublin.*

Bulstrode, Nov. 17. 1780.

I AM infinitely obliged to you, my dear Mrs. Frances Hamilton, for your most kind attention to me in your last most cordial letter; and don't know which endears you most to me, your filial tenderness *, or your fortitude and rectitude of mind, which will not only prove your greatest consolation, but an example worthy of emulation to all that know you. * * * * *

I am most happy that Lady Drogheda † was in Ireland at the time you wanted extraordinary consolation, and her excellent mind and heart

* She had recently lost her mother, to whom the first Letter is addressed.

† Ann, daughter of Francis, first Marquis of Hertford.

could not fail of giving it to one so sensible of her great merit. I hope my next letter from you will be from Moore Abbey, and that you will be so good as to present my best compliments to Lady Drogheda. She was so obliging when in London, to do me the honour of calling upon me, and greatly have I regretted (though I claim no title to it) not having a greater intimacy with one so qualified to delight and improve those she converses with. You judged very right in not leaving your own home immediately; and when you return to it, I make no doubt, but that those tender recollections, which at first increased your sorrow, will then pour balm into your wounds; as those virtues, which made her so dear and valuable to her friends, could not be rewarded in this world.

* * * * *

I thank God, the Duchess of Portland is well, and charges me with her best compliments to you. Every scrap of ingenuity produced and bestowed by our late unequalled friend * is

* The Honourable Mrs. Hamilton: she was almost unequalled in painting flowers and insects, and excelled in many other branches of the art.

treasured up most carefully: if a duplicate of flower or insect comes to your hands, when you are indulging your attention to them, may I beg it, if a more worthy suppliant has not been before me? After the many tokens I have been indulged with from the dear and most valuable hand, I fear this will appear avaricious: be it so — avarice is the vice of age! — I am (as it is too frequently) proud of my failings.

And now, as I know *you* take pleasure in what gives *me* pleasure, and does me honour, I must tell you of our amiable, gracious Queen's politeness, and I may presume to add, kindness to me. She was told I had wished for a lock of her hair; she sent me one with her own royal fingers: she *heard*, (for she was not asked for either,) that I wished to have one of Mrs. Port's * boys in the charter-house, and she gave her commands that one of my little nephews should be set down in her list: you will easily believe I was anxious to make my proper acknowledgments, and under some difficulty

* Mrs. Delany's niece.

how to do it, as I am unable to pay my duty in the drawing-room. Fortunately an agreeable opportunity came in my way.

Last Saturday, the 11th of this month, about one o'clock, as I was sitting at work at my paper mosaic*, in my working dress, and all my papers littered about me, the Duchess Dowager of Portland very intent at another table, making a catalogue to a huge folio of portrait prints, Her Grace's groom of the chambers announced the Queen and Princess Royal, who were just driven into the court: I retired to change my dress and wait for a summons, should Her Majesty send me her commands. The Duchess kept her station to receive her royal visitors, and I was soon sent for, which gave me the opportunity I so much had wished, and my acknowledgments were most graciously accepted. The Queen staid till past three, and left us (though no strangers to her excellencies) in admiration of her good sense, affability blended with dignity, and her enter-

* See Biographical Sketch.

taining conversation. So much propriety, so excellent a heart, such true religious principles, gave a lustre to her royalty that crowns and sceptres cannot bestow. I tell you, my dear Madam, these particulars, that you may partake of that admiration which I know your good heart will feel and enjoy. At the moment you are struck with her superiority, you *love* her as a friend which is very rare: though I have long experienced that happy union, in the person for whose sake I have received so many honours. I should make you an apology for saying so much of a *Queen*, &c. who prefers virtue to rank; but here, I present you with both. But in the midst of my raptures, I have omitted the agreeable sequel; which was, our going to the Queen's Lodge to inquire after Her Majesty the day after she had been here; which we did after church-time. Windsor is but eight miles from hence: I set the Duchess of Portland down at the Queen's Lodge, and went on in *her* chaise to Mrs. Walsingham, in the Castle, a sincere admirer of Lady Drogheda, and who desired me to convey her best compliments, which I put into your hands. I had not been ten minutes

there, when your very ingenious and agreeable cousin, Miss Hamilton * (to whom I am greatly obliged), came in all haste from the Queen, to bring me into her presence; a command I willingly obeyed. Nobody was with the Queen, but the Duchess Dowager of Portland: she graciously made me sit down just before her, and a three hours' conversation confirmed all I have already said: from thence we went to dine with Mrs. Walsingham, spent a very agreeable day, and came home, by the light of a bright moon, about eight o'clock. I need say nothing of my health, after such exploits; but I wish you to say a great deal of my affectionate and grateful regards to my dear friends in Ireland, and to believe me,

Ever affectionately yours,

M. DELANY.

* The late Mrs. Dickenson: at the time this letter was written, she held a situation in the household of the Princesses.

LETTER III.

To Mrs. Frances Hamilton.

Dec. 9. 1781.

I HOPE my dear Mrs. F. H. will excuse my sending the inclosed, and finishing this letter by another hand; but my eyes are too dim to write letters, and so I give up my pen to my own servant, who is now my secretary. The inclosed letter was written for the amusement of Miss Port*; but, as I know you love an account of the royal visits, and may, perhaps, have heard my exploits misrepresented, I think it best to send you matter of fact, and that you may see I pursue nobler game than the wily fox; and, to clear up my character entirely, I

* Mrs. Delany's great-niece.

will let you know the full extent of my chase, which I suppose was not more or less than a quarter of a mile from Bulstrode-gate, which opens upon Garrat's Cross common.

On Saturday, the 1st of this month, the Queen, Princess Royal, and Princess Augusta, came here to wish the Duchess Dowager of Portland joy of the marriage of Miss Thynne, (Lady Weymouth's * eldest daughter,) with the Earl of Aylesford. She is as amiable as beautiful; and as he bears an exceeding good character, I hope he will prove worthy of her. — (This by way of parenthesis.)

The Queen, &c. came about twelve o'clock, and caught me at my spinning-wheel, (the work I am now reduced to,) and made me spin on, and give her a lesson afterwards; and I must say did it tolerably well *for a Queen*. She staid till three o'clock: and now I suppose our royal visits are over for this year.

The weather now confines us to the chimney-corner; but no weather can rob us of elegant amusements at Bulstrode. I thank God, the

* Daughter of the Duchess Dowager of Portland.

Duchess is very well, and her cordial kindness supports me under those infirmities which I must naturally expect: *that* considered, my health is very good.

My best acknowledgements to Mr. H. Hamilton* for his very entertaining letter, which enlivened me very much: and whenever he can bestow on me such a *dram*, it will do me more good than usquebaugh. If this long detail will be any amusement to my dear friend Mrs. Anne Hamilton*, you will communicate it as you please.

Ever your affectionate

M. DELANY.

* The late Governor, Henry Hamilton, fourth son of the Honourable Henry Hamilton, son of Gustavus, first Viscount Boyne.

† Eldest daughter of the Honourable Henry Hamilton.

LETTER IV.

(Enclosed in the preceding.)

ON Tuesday morning, a quarter before ten, the Duchess of Portland stepped into her chaise, and I had the honour of attending her. We went to Garrat's Cross, about the middle of the common, by the appointment and command of the King, who came, about a quarter of an hour after, with the Prince of Wales, and a large retinue. His Majesty came up immediately to the Duchess of Portland's carriage, most gracious, and delighted to see the Duchess out so early. The Queen was there with the two eldest Princesses and Lady Courtown*, in a post-coach and four. The King came with a

* Mary, daughter and co-heiress of Richard Powis of Hindlesham Hall, in Suffolk, married James, the second Earl of Courtown.

message from the Queen to the Duchess of Portland, to say, Her Majesty would see her safe back to Bulstrode, and breakfast with Her Grace. The Duke of Cumberland * was there: and a great many carriages, and many of our acquaintance: amongst them, Lady Mary Forbes † and her family. She took three rooms at the Bull Inn, and breakfasted thirty people. The King himself ordered the spot where the Duchess of Portland's chaise should stand to see the stag turned out. It was brought in a cart to that place by the King's command. The stag was set at liberty, and the poor trembling creature bounded over the plain, in hopes of escaping from his pursuers; but the dogs and the hunters were soon after him, and all out of sight.

The Duchess of Portland returned home, in order to be ready to receive the Queen, who immediately followed before we could pull off our

* Henry Frederick, Duke of Cumberland, brother of His late Majesty George the Third, died September, 1790.

† Lady Mary Capel, daughter of the Earl of Essex, and mother of the Honourable Mrs. W. W. Pole, and Mrs. Villars.

bonnets and cloaks. We received Her Majesty and the Princesses on the steps at the door. She is so condescending and gracious that she makes every thing perfectly easy. We got home a quarter before eleven o'clock; Her Majesty staid till two. In her return back to Windsor she met the chase, and was at the taking of the stag: they would not let the dogs kill him.

On Wednesday the Duchess of Portland intended to go to return the Queen thanks for the honour she had done her: we were to set out early. I dressed my head for the day before breakfast, when a letter arrived from Miss Hamilton *, from the Queen's lodge, to me, with a message from the King, to desire we would not come till Thursday evening, eight o'clock; as he could not be at home till then. Accordingly we went: were there at the appointed hour. The King and Queen and the Princesses received us in the drawing-room, to which we went through the concert-room. Princess Mary took me by the left hand, Princess Sophia and the sweet little

* Afterwards Mrs. Dickinson.

Prince Octavius* took me by the right hand, and led me after the Duchess of Portland into the drawing-room. The King nodded and smiled upon my little conductors, and bid them lead me up to the Queen, who stood in the middle of the room. When we were all seated, (for the Queen is so gracious she will always make me sit down,) the Duchess of Portland sat next to the Queen, and I sat next to Princess Royal. On the other side of me was a chair, and His Majesty did me the honour to sit by me. He went backwards and forwards between that and the music-room: he was so gracious as to have a good deal of conversation with me, particularly about Handel's music; and ordered those pieces to be played which he found I gave a preference to. In the course of the evening the Queen changed places with Princess Royal, saying, most graciously, she must have a little conversation with Mrs Delany, which lasted about half an hour. She then got up, it being half-an-hour after ten, and said she was afraid she should keep the Duchess

* Died May, 1785, aged four years.

of Portland too late, and made her courtesy, and we withdrew. There was nobody but their attendants, and Lord and Lady Courtown. Nothing could be more easy and agreeable. We came home very well lighted by our lanterns and the Northern Lights; sat down, and ate a hearty supper at twelve o'clock, and slept very well after it. I own I expected to be more fatigued than I was. I thank God, the Duchess of Portland got no cold, and we are both very well.

LETTER V.

To Mrs. Frances Hamilton.

Bulstrode, December 17. 1782.

THE darkness of the weather makes it impossible for me to write with my own hand, and I am so impatient to answer my dear friend's last packet, that I cannot wait for a brighter day. Great was my joy on the recovery of the fugitive letter and its precious contents: though I own my regret equalled my pleasure, that it did not come to me at a time when my answer might have been some consolation to you. I shall certainly lose no opportunity of giving you the satisfaction you desire in regard to Lady D. who, I understand, is still at Kensington, and the time is uncertain when I may be within her reach, as I think we shall not leave this place this fortnight; but I will send a card of inquiry

after her, and communicate to her your affectionate solicitation about her.

As soon as I go to town I will give her notice. * * * * *

I have just had the satisfaction of receiving a letter from Governor Henry Hamilton, with his usual kindness and pleasantry. The frequent recollections I have of the happy days I have spent with my dear friends in Ireland enliven my dark hours, and fill my heart with the warmest gratitude for the happiness I have enjoyed. I have been told that Mr. Edward Hamilton * is in England: I hope he will not fly back again to Ireland before I am within his reach.

The bad weather affects even the fire-side of Bulstrode; which the Duchess of Portland and myself have in some degree been sensible of, though much less so, I am sure, than we should in London. It has interrupted, too, a little the intercourse between us and our royal neighbours. The Queen made a morning visit here about three weeks ago, and brought only Lady

* Youngest son of the Honourable Henry Hamilton.

Dartrey * with her. The Duchess paid her duty in return, at the Queen's lodge, and I had the honour of accompanying her. The Queen was quite alone in her dressing-room: her dress was simple and elegant, in a pale lilach satin. She added dignity to her dress by her most gracious manner of conversing. She was making fringe in a frame, and did me the honour to show me how to do it, and to say she would send me such a frame as her own, as she thought it was a work that would not try my eyes. We were dismissed at three o'clock, and as we were going to the chaise, we met, in the passage, the King and his greyhounds just returned from coursing. He told the Duchess that he could not part with her so; but we must both make him a visit, and opened the door for us to go with him into the drawing-room. The Queen soon came to us, and invited us back to her apartment, as the warmer place, and we staid till four o'clock. We arrived at Bul-

* The Lady Anne Fermor, daughter of Thomas, first Earl of Pomfret, married Thomas Lord Dartrey, created Lord Viscount Cremorne in July, 1785.

strode about half-an-hour after five o'clock : found Mr. Barnard Dewes * starving in the midst of plenty ; for he was determined not to dine till we came home. I expect Mrs. and Miss Port the 21st or 22d of January. All my young people are well. Now, my dear Mrs. F. Hamilton, I can say no more ; but am

Ever your affectionate

M. DELANY.

* Mrs. Delany's nephew.

LETTER VI.

To Mrs. Frances Hamilton.

Bulstrode, October 10th, 1783.

MY dear friend, I am very much obliged to you for the satisfactory account you have given me of your present situation, and well pleased at your cultivating an intimacy with your worthy and amiable relations:— when they are so, our natural connections are to be preferred to all others, and I am sure your own good qualities and friendly disposition, must secure you their love and esteem.— * * * *

* * * * I wish I could answer your kind solicitude about my health, entirely to your satisfaction. A return of the epidemic disorder soon after I came to Bulstrode

has left me a great languor behind it; but, I thank God, I am now gaining strength again, and only feel that gentle decay natural to my years, and what I ought to be very thankful for as well as my friends. The daily tender attention I receive from my noble one here, is a constant reviving cordial;—she has not been well, but is better, and desires me to add her best wishes and compliments to you and Mrs. Anne Hamilton, and thinks herself much obliged to you both, for the satisfaction you express at my being here: and now I will add, for your amusement, the way of life we have led since we left town. We have had many visitors for two or three days in succession; and when health has permitted us, have enjoyed this delightful place; but, as I know you interest yourself in all the honours I receive, I must now tell you of our royal visitors. — In a few days after our arrival here, the Duchess of Portland and I were sitting in the long gallery, very busy with our different employments, when, without any ceremony, His Majesty walked up to our table unperceived and unknown, till he came quite up to us. You may

believe we were at first a little fluttered with his royal presence; but his courteous and affable manner soon made him a welcome guest. He came to inform the Duchess of Portland of the Queen's perfect recovery after her lying-in, which made him doubly welcome.

Breakfast was called for, and after a visit of two hours, the King left us. About a week after this, the King and Queen came together, only accompanied by Lady Courtown. They breakfasted and stayed much about the same time. The *etiquette* is, that the person, on whom such an honour is conferred, goes the next day to enquire after Their Majesties; but the Queen waved that ceremony, and desired the Duchess not to come till she received a summons, as they were going to St. James's for some days. Last Thursday, 2d of October, a little before twelve o'clock, word was brought that the Royal Family were coming up the Park: and immediately after, two coaches-and-six, with the King on horseback, and a great retinue, came up to the hall door. The company were, the King and Queen, Princess Royal, Princess Augusta, Princess Elizabeth, Princess Mary,

and Princess Sophia, — a lovely group, all dressed in white muslin polonoises, white chip hats with white feathers, except the Queen, who had on a black hat and cloak; — the King dressed in his Windsor uniform of blue and gold; the Queen, attended by the Duchess of Ancaster, who is mistress of the robes, and Lady Elizabeth Waldegrave*, who attends the two eldest Princesses, and Mrs. Goldsworthy, who is sub-governess to the three younger Princesses. The King had no attendants but the equerries, Major Digby and Major Price. They were in the drawing-room before I was sent for, where I found the King and Queen and Duchess of Portland seated at a table in the middle of the room. The King, with his usual graciousness, came up to me, and brought me forward, and I found the Queen very busy in showing a very elegant machine to the Duchess of Portland, which was a frame for weaving of fringe, of a new and most delicate

* Elizabeth Laura, daughter of James, second Earl Waldegrave, by Maria, (daughter of Sir Edward Walpole,) afterwards Duchess of Gloucester, married her first cousin, George, fourth Earl of Waldegrave.

structure, and would take up as much paper as has already been written upon to describe it minutely, yet it is of such simplicity as to be very useful. You will easily imagine the grateful feeling I had when the Queen presented it to me, to make up some knotted fringe which she saw me about. The King, at the same time, said he must contribute something to my work, and presented me with a gold knotting shuttle, of most exquisite workmanship and taste; and I am at this time, while I am dictating the letter, knotting white silk, to fringe the bag which is to contain it.

On the Monday after, we were appointed to go to the lodge at Windsor, at two o'clock. We were first taken into the Duchess of Ancaster's dressing-room; in a quarter of an hour after, to the King and Queen in the drawing-room, who had nobody with them but Prince Alverstaden, the Hanoverian minister, which gave me an opportunity of hearing the Queen speak German; and I may say, it was the first time I had received pleasure from what I did not understand; but there was such a

fluency and sweetness in her manner of speaking it, that it sounded as gentle as Italian.

There were two chairs brought in, for the Duchess of Portland and myself to sit on, (by order of Their Majesties,) which were easier than those belonging to the room. — We were seated near the door that opened into the concert-room. The King directed them to play Handel and Geminiani's music, which he was graciously pleased to say was to gratify me. These are flattering honours. I should not indulge so much upon this subject, but that I depend upon your considering it proceeding more from gratitude than vanity. — The three eldest Princesses came into the room in about half an hour after we were seated. All the royal family were dressed in a uniform for the *demi-saison*, of a violet-blue armozine, gauze aprons, &c. &c.: the Queen had the addition of a great many fine pearls.

When the concert of music was over, the young Princess Amelia, nine weeks old, was sent for, and brought in by her nurse and attendants. The King took her in his arms, and

presented her to the Duchess of Portland and to me. Your affectionate heart would have been delighted with the royal domestic scene; an example worthy of imitation by all ranks, and, indeed, adding dignity to their high station. We were at Bulstrode before five, and very well after our expedition. I am afraid *you* will be much more tired than we were, in travelling through this long narration. If it affords any amusement to our dear friend, Mrs. Anne Hamilton *, as well as to yourself, it will give much satisfaction to my dear Mrs. F. Hamilton's

Most affectionate and obliged friend,

M. DELANY

Continue your kind offices to the friends I must always esteem in Ireland.

* Eldest daughter of the Hon. Henry Hamilton, son of Gustavus first Viscount Boyne.

LETTER VII.

To Mrs. Frances Hamilton.

Bulstrode, June 22. 1784.

ACCORDING to your kind wishes, my dear friend, I answer your last letter from Bulstrode. The Duchess Dowager of Portland came here a fortnight ago, finding London too hot and noisy for her. Here sweetness and tranquillity reign. It was not in my power to attend her till last Wednesday; my dear child * could not conveniently go home till that time, and Mrs. Sandford † being in town, made me unwilling

* Miss Port, Mrs. Delany's great-niece.

† Miss Sarah Chapone, sister-in-law to Mrs. Chapone, the well-known and justly esteemed writer, and mother of the present Bishop Sandford, of Edinburgh.

to lose their company. Our dear and valuable Mrs. Sandford, always the same delightful friend, and ever sincerely attached to you, I think, is tolerably well in health.

Her noble spirit of using her utmost effort for the sake of her sons, struggles hard with her delicate constitution; but I think it maintains its ground beyond what we could expect. Her two eldest sons are at Oxford; her third son on the seas, towards Newfoundland; all going on to her heart's content, and much in favour with their preceptors. Her son William is to pursue law, and Mrs. Sandford is now in London in order to place him there to the best advantage.

* * * * *

As you are so kind as to enquire particularly after my dear girl, (no longer *little*;) I can with pleasure tell you, that she is in perfect good health; sensible, pleasing in her appearance, quick of apprehension, very good-humoured, and well-disposed. With these qualities you may be sure she has been a very agreeable companion to me; but her dear mother, who has laid the best foundation for her happiness here and hereafter, by giving her good principles,

has too strong a claim to a share in her company, for me to entirely engross her, were it convenient for me to keep her. I thank God, Mrs. Port and her family are well, as all my nephews are in good health; and I can boast of all their unremitting kind attentions to me. The Veseys, I believe, will remain in England another year; but I cannot give a very good account of their health. Mr. and Mrs. Vesey, and Mrs. Hancock, are in a very declining way; but still have spirit enough to engage in the tumult of assemblies, or at least in large parties of company. Poor Mrs. Vesey is so deaf, that when she is in company she carries her stool and cushion from one end of the room to the other, to be near those that are engaged in conversation. I have the satisfaction of assuring you that I found the Duchess Dowager of Portland in better health than when she came down. Her goodness and tenderness towards me increase with my infirmities. She always charges me with her good wishes and compliments to you. I thank God my own health is such as I ought to be very thankful for, feeling very gently the decay of nature. I am always happy

to hear of the health and happiness of my friends in Ireland, and feel that gratitude towards them which they so highly merit.

Now, according to my usual custom, I must give you an account of my past life and actions, regarding royal favours. As soon as the bitterness of winter was over, I received the King and Queen's commands to attend the Duchess of Portland to the Queen's House, at eight o'clock in the evening: there was no company there but the five Princesses and Lady Charlotte Finch. There was a concert of music in the next room, which (the door being open) we heard in a very agreeable manner. The King walked backwards and forwards between the rooms; had a great deal of conversation with the Duchess of Portland; and did me the honour of sharing in it some times.

We had much talk, particularly about music; and His Majesty condescended to order those pieces of music to be played, that he called my favourites. The Duchess of Portland sat on the Queen's right hand, and I on her left. Her Majesty talked a great deal to me about books, especially about those on religion, and recom-

mended to me an explanation of the four Evangelists, translated from the German. The next morning she sent me a present of the work, in three volumes.

The old 14th of May, which my dear and valuable friends in Ireland so often made a day of delight to me, is not quite laid aside: my young niece Port takes upon her every year, on its return, to invite a select set of company, not exceeding six persons, to dine with me. On the last, a summons was sent to me from Their Majesties, that, as they were informed it was my birth-day, they must see me, and I, with the Duchess of Portland, obeyed their commands that evening. Nobody there but the royal family, Lady Charlotte Finch, and Lady Weymouth, who was the Lady of the Bedchamber in Waiting. It does not become me to say the gracious, kind, and flattering manner with which they received me. The Queen ordered Lady Weymouth to tie about my neck a small medallion of the King, set round with brilliants. The resemblance, which is very great, and the gracious manner in which it was done, make it invaluable. I cannot enter into a long detail of the

Commemoration of Handel, performed in Westminster Abbey: the effect was wonderful, and I had the courage (having a very easy opportunity of going into the Abbey) of hearing it four times. Yesterday morning Their Majesties, only accompanied by Lady Louisa Clayton, breakfasted here. Thus ends the history and letter of my dear Mrs. F. Hamilton's most affectionate faithful friend and servant,

M. DELANY.

I hope Mr. Sackville Hamilton's* health is established; I beg my love to him and his sister.

* The late Right Hon S. Hamilton, third son of the Hon. Henry Hamilton, son of Gustavus first Viscount Boyne.

LETTER VIII.

*To Mrs. Frances Hamilton, Summer Hill,
Dublin.*

St. James's Place, May 19. 1785.

Now it is my turn, my dear Mrs. F. Hamilton, to make an apology for a too long silence; but as we are mutually convinced of each other's affection, here let apologies drop. As you have been so good as to give me the satisfaction of knowing how your time has passed, I will endeavour to make you the same return, though not so well expressed. But first, I must thank my dear friend for her kind remembrance of my English friends, (who, I thank God, are all well,) and for your kind negociation between me and those of Ireland, who will ever be dear to me. My little girl (who, indeed, now is a very tall

one) is still with me, and every body tells me she improves in her appearance, and as much in every respect as I can expect from her years. My secretary, were she at liberty, would say more. Miss P. desires her compliments, and wishes much to be acquainted with you.

My niece Port made me a short visit in March, and was much recovered: her daughter, I believe, will return back with her uncle Dewes, who comes to town to hear the fine performance of the Abbey music, which is to be this year, in order to raise a sum for charitable uses. The extreme coldness of the very long winter kept me entirely at home; but my fire-side was enriched by the constant kind attention of my friends and acquaintance, who preferred a warm room and a sincere welcome from one they are so partial to, to the dissipated manner of the times; which is, to live in public from morning till night. My health, during this season, has been better than my years could promise; though sensible of that decay, which, though awful, is to lead me to that happiness I humbly hope for, relying on

that mercy which has graciously promised to accept of our endeavours,

Since I last wrote to you, I have had an intercourse with His Majesty again by way of letter, on his returning the books of Mr. Handel's music, which my nephew, J. Dewes, had lent him. The King's letter was very gracious and condescending; much pleased with some music that was new to him among the books, and sent his acknowledgments to my nephew in the most obliging manner; adding, that he would not ask me to come and hear it performed at the Queen's House till the spring was so far advanced, that it might be safe for me to venture. On Thursday, the 9th of May, I received a note from Lady Weymouth, to tell me the Queen invited me to Her Majesty's house; to come at seven o'clock with the Duchess Dowager of Portland, to hear Mrs. Siddons read "The Provok'd Husband." You may believe I obeyed the royal summons, and was much entertained. It was very desirable to me, as I had no other opportunity of hearing or seeing Mrs. Siddons; and she fully answered

my expectations: her person and manner perfectly agreeable. We were received in the great drawing-room by the King and Queen, their five daughters and Prince Edward. Besides the royal family, there were only the Duchess Dowager of Portland, her daughter Lady Weymouth, and her beautiful granddaughter Lady Aylesford; Lord * and Lady † Harcourt, Lady Charlotte Finch, Duke of Montague, and the Gentlemen attendant on the King. There were two rows of chairs for the company, the length of the room.

Their Majesties sat in the middle of the first row, with the Princesses on each hand, which filled it. The rest of the ladies were seated in the row behind them, and as there was a space between that and the wall, the lords and gentlemen that were admitted stood there. Mrs. Siddons read standing, and had a desk with candles before her: she behaved with great propriety, and read two acts of the Provoked

* George Simon, second Earl Harcourt; died April, 1809.

† Elizabeth, daughter of George Venables, Lord Vernon.

Husband, which was abridged, by leaving out Sir Francis and Lady Wronghead's parts, &c.; but she introduced John Moody's account of the journey, and read it admirably. The part of Lord and Lady Townly's reconciliation she worked up finely, and made it very affecting. She also read Queen Katherine's last speech in King Henry VIII. She was allowed three pauses, to go into the next room and refresh herself, for half an hour each time. After she was dismissed, Their Majesties detained the company some time, to talk over what had passed, which was not the least agreeable part of the entertainment. I was so flattered by their most kind reception of me, that I really did not feel the fatigue, notwithstanding I believe it was past twelve, before we made our last courtesy; and I cannot say, though that was a very late hour for me, that I suffered from it, and I had tried my strength the week before, by having been at two concerts.

The particular account you have sent me of your agreeable relations (such societies are rare) was very delightful, and you flatter me very much when you say it puts you in mind of

ancient days at Delville, the recollection of which will ever be pleasant, though painful to me. I am sorry I cannot send you a copy of the letters you hint at; but I have refused it to near relations, and though they would do me great honour, I think it is not proper. I could depend on *your* discretion, but not on every one's in whose hands they might fall. The Duchess Dowager of Portland has had a bad cough, but is now better; always enquires after you in the kindest manner, and charges me with her compliments. Had I another page I could fill it with her goodness to me.

Mrs. Sandford, always the same amiable creature, is tolerably well in health, though too tender to venture out of her own house, which she has not done since my being in town, and I have not been able to see her above three times. We never meet without your being in the subject of our conversation — mutual in our esteem and good wishes. Her sons go on to her heart's content, and approved of by every body. Mr. Vesey * is still alive, and that is all one can

* Agmondisham Vesey, Esq. of Lucan.

say: poor Mrs. Vesey in deep affliction, and in a very declining state of health: Mrs. Hancock *, I fear, no less so; but supports them with her steady conduct in the best manner she can: but what is *human* support, if we do not look higher!

My secretary says I am at the end of my letter; and I can only add, that I am my dear friend's

Most affectionate and obliged

M. DELANY.

I hear "The School for Scandal" is to be got in Ireland; I beg you will procure me two copies. It has not been published in England. Send them me the first opportunity.

* Sister to Mrs. Vesey.

LETTER IX.

*To Mrs. Frances Hamilton, Summer-Hill,
Dublin.*

Argyle-Street, July 24. 1785.

MADAM,

MRS. DELANY, too well knowing the concern you will feel for her under her present great loss, of which the newspapers must have informed you, has honoured me with her commands to address these lines to you, to satisfy your anxiety about her as far as that can be. Mrs. Delany had been with the Duchess of Portland, about ten days, at Bulstrode, when the sad event of her Grace's death happened; and the next day Mrs. Delany came to town, and though in great affliction, I am happy to add, in good health, which, not yet failing her, and her having many kind friends about her, we flatter ourselves is not likely to do so; as her affliction

is so perfectly calm and rational as to allow her to accept the unwearied attentions they offer her: among them my mother bears no small share, as you may believe.

Mrs. Delany has much consolation from the cordial civilities and kindnesses she has received from the Duke and Duchess of Portland, as well as from all other parts of the family, since the late sad change. The Duke's own expression has been that ever he should see his mother in Mrs. Delany, and shall always think himself fulfilling his late mother's wishes when he obeys her commands, or contributes any thing to her satisfaction. You may be assured, Madam, that our beloved Mrs. Delany is not slow in making use of such consolations as these; which at the same time that they testify the great worth of the friend she has lost, in no less a degree prove the respectable light she herself must have appeared in to all the family.

Indeed from the highest to the humblest of her friends, every one joins in endeavouring to alleviate the grief and disappointment Mrs. Delany has sustained. The King, the Queen,

and Princess Amelia*, have been as constant and regular in their solicitous inquiries after Mrs. Delany since the Duchess's death, as they were of both the excellent friends during her Grace's late illness, which was of a complicated kind. But the immediate cause of her death was a bilious complaint, which terminated, it is apprehended, in a mortification. Poor Mr. Jones, her Grace's butler, died the Sunday before, at Bulstrode, of the same complaint, which increased the distress of the household. We understand the Duchess's remains are to be interred on Friday or Saturday next, in Westminster Abbey, where the late Duke was buried, as well as all the Harley family. When that event is over, we hope Mrs. Delany's affliction will more subside. You will be glad to hear that Mr. Dewes is with her; and that Miss Port will be brought to her either Friday or Saturday next at farthest, which will be a great balm to her, as she is indeed a very amiable young lady, and greatly beloved by all Mrs. Delany's friends.

* Aunt to His late Majesty.

Though personally unknown to you, Madam, I shall take great satisfaction to myself if this account should relieve any part of the anxiety you must, at this time, feel for Mrs. Delany; as my mother has informed me that my life began with obligations to you, which cannot but bind me,

Dear Madam,

Ever your most obliged and obedient
humble servant,

WILLIAM SANDFORD.

P. S. Mrs. Delany bids me add her affectionate remembrances to her friends * * * *, having no doubt you will kindly communicate this account to them.

My mother's affectionate compliments ever attend you.

I forgot to say, Mrs. Delany is going, in a few days, to Mrs. Boscawen's, at Coney Hatch. — Mrs. Delany had a visit from the Duchess of Portland; the first visit she has made *any* body since the Duchess Dowager's death.

LETTER X.

To Mrs. Frances Hamilton.

St. James's Place, Aug. 31. 1785.

I HAVE waited till I was able to dictate a few lines to my dear sympathising friend: the *subject* is too tender for me to enter upon, and I endeavour to look forward to the unmerited blessings still bestowed upon me, with humble resignation, to that gracious Providence who knows what is fittest for me. I feel my obligations to my dear friends who think of me so kindly, and assure them of my affectionate and constant good wishes.

I have had in the house with me, ever since my nephews were obliged to leave me, Miss Burney, the author of *Evelina* and *Cecilia*,

which, excellent as they are, are her meanest praise. Her admirable understanding, her tender affection, and sweetness of manners, make her valuable to all those who have the happiness to know her; and it has been no small satisfaction to me to have had such a companion, during my confinement, for my dear girl. I have had one week's very severe illness: a bad sore throat attended with a great deal of fever, which, in my nervous dejected state, was very alarming; but, I thank God, I have now nothing in regard to my health to struggle with, but great weakness. I have, as you may suppose, received every kind attention and consolation from our dear Mrs. Sandford, whose health at present is tolerably good.

And now, my dear friend, I must bid you adieu, as my head will not hold out to dictate any more: it is unnecessary to say, could I express it, how truly I am your affectionate and obliged

M. DELANY.

I employ my secretary just to add some new proofs I have received of Their Majesties good-

ness to me. Astley, my servant, whom I sent to Windsor last Thursday to see what conveniences there might be wanting in the house Their Majesties have been so gracious to give me, when there, received the King's command that I was only "to bring myself, niece, clothes, and attendants, as stores of every kind would be laid in for me."

The play-books came safe, for which accept my best thanks.

LETTER XI.

*To Mrs. Frances Hamilton, Summer-Hill,
Dublin.*

St. Alban's Street, Windsor, Sept. 20. 1785.

THE hurry that I have been in since my arrival at this place, has prevented the intelligence that I am sure my dear friend would like to receive, and, indeed, I hardly know how to recollect the many honours and kindnesses I hourly receive in my present situation. On Saturday, the 3d of this month, one of the Queen's messengers came and brought me the following letter from Her Majesty, written with her own hand: —

“ My dear Mrs. Delany will be glad to hear
 “ that I am charged by The King to summon
 “ her to her new abode at Windsor for Tuesday
 “ next, where she will find all the most essen-

“ tial parts of the house ready, excepting some
 “ little trifles, which it will be better for
 “ Mrs. Delany to direct herself in person, or
 “ by her little deputy, Miss Port. I need not,
 “ I hope, add, that I shall be extremely glad
 “ and happy to see so amiable an inhabitant in
 “ this our sweet retreat; and wish, very sin-
 “ cerely, that my dear Mrs. Delany may enjoy
 “ every blessing amongst us that her merits de-
 “ serve. That we may long enjoy her amiable
 “ company, Amen! These are the *true* senti-
 “ ments of

“ My dear Mrs. Delany's

“ Very affectionate Queen,

“ CHARLOTTE.”

Queen's Lodge,
 Windsor, Sept. 3. 1785.

P. S. “ I must also beg that Mrs. Delany
 “ will choose her own time of coming as will
 “ best suit her own convenience.”

MY ANSWER.

“ It is impossible to express how I am over-
 “ whelmed with Your Majesty's excess of good-

“ness to me. I shall, with the warmest duty
“and most humble respect, obey a command
“that bestows such honour and happiness on
“Your Majesty’s most dutiful and most obe-
“dient humble servant,

“And subject,

“MARY DELANY.”

I received the Queen’s letter at dinner, and was obliged to answer it instantly, with my own hand, without seeing a letter I wrote. I thank God I had strength enough to obey the gracious summons on the day appointed. I arrived here about eight o’clock in the evening, and found His Majesty in the house ready to receive me. I threw myself at his feet, indeed unable to utter a word; he raised and saluted me, and said he meant not to stay longer than to desire I would order every thing that could make the house comfortable and agreeable to me, and then retired.

Truly I found nothing wanting, as it is as pleasant and commodious as I could wish it to be, with a very pretty garden, which joins to that of the Queen’s Lodge. The next morning Her

Majesty sent one of her ladies to know how I had rested, and how I was in health, and whether her coming would not be troublesome? You may be sure I accepted the honour, and she came about two o'clock. I was lame, and could not go down, as I ought to have done, to the door; but Her Majesty came up stairs, and I received her on my knees. Our meeting was mutually affecting; she well knew the value of what I had lost, and it was some time after we were seated (for she always makes me sit down) before we could either of us speak. It is impossible for me to do justice to her great condescension and tenderness, which were almost equal to what I had lost. She repeated, in the strongest terms, her wish, and the King's, that I should be as easy and as happy as they could possibly make me; that they waved all ceremony, and desired to come to me like *friends*. The Queen delivered me a paper from the King, which contained the first quarter of 300*l.* per annum, which His Majesty allows me out of His Privy Purse. Their Majesties have drank tea with me five times, and the Princesses three. They generally stay two hours, or longer.

In short, I have either seen or heard from them every day. I have not yet been at the Queen's Lodge, though they have expressed an impatience for me to come; but I have still so sad a drawback upon my spirits, that I must decline the honour till I am better able to enjoy it: as they have the goodness not to press me. Their visits here are paid in the most quiet private manner, like those of the most consoling and interested friends; so that I may *truly* say, they are a royal cordial, and I see very few people besides. They are very condescending in their notice of my niece, and think her a fine girl. She is delighted, as is very natural, with all the joys of the place. I have been three times at the King's private chapel at early prayers, eight o'clock, where the royal family constantly attend; and they walk home to breakfast afterwards, whilst I am conveyed in a very elegant new chair home, which the King has made me a present of for that purpose. As to my health it is surprisingly good, considering the sufferings of my agitated spirits; and that I was hardly recovered, when I came, of a putrid sore throat and fever. How thankful ought I to be

to Providence for the wonderful blessings I have received! How ungrateful must I be, not to endeavour to resign those withdrawn from me as I ought to do! It is a cordial comfort to me to receive a good account from you of your health and prosperity, and the rest of my dear friends who have so kindly felt for me. I cannot dictate a word more, but believe me, unalterably and affectionately,

Yours,

M. DELANY

P. S. I sincerely rejoice at Mr. Sackville Hamilton's * present situation; indeed, I do not know any distinction that he is not worthy of, and the world agree with me.

* The late Right Hon. Sackville Hamilton.

LETTER XII.

To Mrs. Frances Hamilton.

St. Alban's Street, Windsor, Nov. 9. 1785.

I HAVE not, lately, been very well, which prevented my answering my dear friend's two kind letters sooner. I thank God, I am at present tolerably well in health, and am surrounded with so many comforts, and such uncommon friends, that great must be my reproach if they do not, in some degree, dissipate that gloom that at times overwhelms me. You give me such good reasons for the request you make of communicating some parts of my letters to your particular friends, that it is impossible for me to refuse what you say will give you satisfaction, and I know I can trust your discretion: the daily marks of *royal* favour (which, indeed,

should rather be termed *friendly*;) cannot be arranged in a sheet of paper; they are bestowed most graciously, and received most gratefully, and with such consideration as to banish that awe, which otherwise would be painful to me; and my sensations, when I am in their company, are, respect, admiration, and affection. I have been several evenings at the Queen's Lodge, with no other company but their own most lovely family. They sit round a large table, on which are books, work, pencils, and paper. The Queen has the goodness to make me sit down next to her; and delights me with her conversation, which is informing, elegant, and pleasing, beyond description, whilst the younger part of the family are drawing and working, &c. &c. the beautiful babe, Princess Amelia, bearing her part in the entertainment; sometimes in one of her sisters' laps; sometimes playing with the King on the carpet; which, altogether, exhibits such a delightful scene, as would require an Addison's pen, or a Vandyke's pencil, to do justice to. In the next room is the band of music, who play from eight o'clock till ten. The King generally

directs them what pieces of music to play, chiefly Handel's. Here I must stop, and return to my own house. Mr. Dewes, from Wellsbourn, came here on the 25th of October: on the 28th Their Majesties, five Princesses, and the youngest Princes, came at seven o'clock in the evening to drink tea with me. All the Princesses and Princes had a commerce table. Miss Emily Clayton, daughter to Lady Louisa Clayton, and Miss Port, did the honours of it. It gave me a pleasing opportunity of introducing Mr. Dewes to Their Majesties: the King took gracious notice of him; and having heard that his youngest brother, Mr. John Dewes, wished to take the name of Granville, said to Mr. Dewes, that he desired he might, from that time, be called by that name, and gave orders that his sign manual should be prepared for that purpose, which has accordingly been done. The want of franks cuts me short: do me justice as usual to all dear friends, and believe me ever

Affectionately yours,

M. DELANY.

I hear Mr. Edward Hamilton is in England. I hope, if he makes a visit to his friend Lord Harcourt, I may have a chance of seeing him.

Miss Port is very well and very happy, and I am much flattered by the approbation she meets with.

LETTER XIII.

*To Mrs. Frances Hamilton, Summer-Hill,
Dublin.*

Windsor, July 3. 1786.

I WILL not make any apology for a silence that I hope has appeared too long for you, as well as myself; or can I at this time find your last letter, to answer regularly, as I ought to do, all your kind intelligence of yourself and friends. My health, in the main, holds out wonderfully, in the midst of many trying circumstances; but I endeavour to look forward with hope and comfort to that place, where “the weary will be at rest;”—enjoy the many undeserved blessings still held out to me, and praying for assistance to support me under those trials Providence thinks fit to lay upon me.

I must wave what has passed during the greatest part of my silence, as my memory will not serve me to recollect, or my head able to dictate, as circumstantially as formerly. During my short stay in London in the winter, many alterations were made in my house here, which my great benefactors thought would make it more commodious to me; and indeed it is now a most complete, elegant, comfortable dwelling: and I am hourly receiving marks of attention and kindness that cannot be expressed. The constant course of my living at present, from which I vary very little, is as follows: I seldom miss going to early prayers at the King's chapel, at eight o'clock, where I never fail of seeing Their Majesties and all the royal family. The common way of going up to the chapel is through the great entrance into the castle, which is a large room with stone pillars, at the corner of which is a narrow winding staircase, which leads to the chapel; but Their Majesties, with their usual goodness and indulgence, have ordered that I should be admitted through the great staircase, which is a very easy ascent. When chapel is over, all

the congregation make a line in the great portico till Their Majesties have passed; for they always walk to chapel and back again, and speak to every body of consequence as they pass: indeed, it is a delightful sight to see so much beauty, dignity, and condescension, united as they are in the royal family. I come home to breakfast generally about nine o'clock: if I and the weather are well enough, I take the air for two hours. The rest of the morning is devoted to business, and the company of my particular friends. I admit no formal visitors, as I really have not time or spirits for it, and every body here is very civil and very considerate. My afternoons I keep entirely to myself, that I may have no interruption whenever my royal neighbours condescend to visit me: their usual time of coming is between six and seven o'clock, and generally stay till between eight and nine. They always drink tea here, and my niece has the honour of dealing it about to all the royal family, as they will not suffer me to do it (though it is my place); the Queen always placing me upon the sofa by her, and the King when he sits down, which is sel-

dom, sits next the sofa. Indeed, their visits are not limited to the afternoons, for Their Majesties often call on me in a morning and take me as they find me, not suffering any body to give me notice of their being come. Great as my awe is, Their Majesties have such sweetness of manners that it takes off painful sensation.

I went to town at the anniversary of the Abbey music: the King gave me and Miss Port tickets to go; though I suspected my own ability in being able to make use of them, I could not deprive Miss Port of the opportunity of going, but she was, (I may say, happily) prevented, by falling ill of the measles, which, I thank God, she has passed through as well as can be wished. I enjoyed one performance of the music, and we returned to Windsor on the 16th of June.

An event has taken place lately which gives me great satisfaction: I am sure you are acquainted with the novel entitled Cecilia, much admired for its good sense, variety of character, delicacy of sentiment, &c. &c.: there is nothing good, and amiable, and agreeable mentioned in the book that is not possessed by the author of it,

Miss Burney : I have been acquainted with her now three years : her extreme diffidence of herself, notwithstanding her great genius, and the applause she has met with, adds lustre to all her excellencies, and all improve on acquaintance. In the course of this last year, she has been so good as to pass a few weeks with me at Windsor, which gave the Queen an opportunity of seeing and talking with her, which Her Majesty was so gracious to admit of. One of the principal ladies that attend the Queen's person as dresser is going to retire into her own country, being in too bad a state of health to continue her honourable and delightful employment, for such it must be near such a queen ; and Miss Burney is to be the happy successor, chosen by the Queen without any particular recommendation from any body. I believe she comes into waiting next week.

I had the pleasure, before I came out of town, of seeing Governor Hamilton in good health and spirits. He and my young niece hold a droll correspondence : he and I sometimes quarrel about his talking of her beauty to her face. She is really pretty, and I trust

will be good and agreeable. The way to have her so, is to keep her out of the line of vanity. I think I have got H. H. in pretty good order now. Continue your usual good offices between me and your good friends in Ireland, and

Believe me ever yours

most affectionately,

M. DELANY.

Mrs. Sandford and her sons are very well. I have hopes of her making me a visit for some days.

LETTER XIV.

To Mrs. Frances Hamilton.

St. Alban's Street, Windsor, Sept. 24. 1786.

MY dear friend, I will not stint myself in room, though I fear the contents will not pay for the trouble of reading them: yet so much I depend upon your partial indulgence, I will hazard that consequence to show my readiness in complying with your request. You oblige me beyond expression, my dear friend, in giving me so particular an account of yourself and friends. Time and absence, I think, rather increase than diminish affection, when we from time to time communicate that mutual remembrance and regard which has lasted so many years.

Your charming account of my amiable old

friend, Mrs. Clements, gives me cordial comfort, and is a strong testimony what an excellent preservative is sweetness of disposition, and a conscious reflection of her having done her duty in every state of life. How desirable it is to imitate such an example !

Miss Port, I thank God, is now very well : much grown, much improved, and I am much flattered by the approbation she meets with ; as she has good sense, and her principles, I trust, well founded. I hope she will prove a reasonable creature, and be able to stem the torrent of folly and indiscretion which her youth and the world may subject her to. My own health is very tolerable, though subject to attacks of faintness and nervous disorders, that sometimes, I fear, may alarm my friends : I would fain lessen their anxiety, and leave them to think calmly of that hour, which, I thank God, appears to me without terror : the deprivation of the friends we have loved best, and the falling off of many for whom we have a great regard, casts such a melancholy gloom as to make one long for eternity ; humbly beseeching the Almighty to make me fit for the change :

but there are times, I assure you, when that gloom is dispelled, and my heart is relieved and warmed by the very kind attentions of my friends of all degrees: and my greatest distress is, that I feel such an overflowing of gratitude as cannot be expressed.

It is impossible for me to enumerate the daily instances I receive from my royal friends; who seem unwearied in the pursuit of making me as happy as they can. I am sure you must be very sensible how thankful I am to Providence for the late wonderful escape of His Majesty from the stroke of assassination: indeed, the horror that there was a possibility that such an attempt would be made, shocked me so much at first, that I could hardly enjoy the blessing of such a preservation. The King would not suffer any body to inform the Queen of that event, till he could show himself in person to her. He returned to Windsor as soon as the Council was over. When His Majesty entered the Queen's dressing-room, he found her with the two eldest Princesses; and entering, in an animated manner, said, "Here I am, safe and well!" The Queen suspected from this say-

ing, that some accident had happened, on which he informed her of the whole affair. The Queen stood struck and motionless for some time, till the Princesses burst into tears, in which she immediately found relief by joining with them. Joy soon succeeded this agitation of mind, on the assurance that the person was insane that had the boldness to make the attack, which took off all aggravating suspicion; and it has been the means of showing the whole kingdom, that the King has the hearts of his subjects. I must tell you a particular gracious attention to me on the occasion: Their Majesties sent immediately to my house to give orders I should not be told of it till the next morning, for fear the agitation should give me a bad night. Dowager Lady Spencer was in the house with me, and went with me to early prayers, next morning, at eight o'clock; and after chapel was over she separated herself from me, and had a long conference with the King and Queen, as they stopped to speak to her on our coming out of chapel. When we returned to breakfast, I taxed her with her having robbed me of an opportunity of hearing what Their Majesties said

to her, by standing at such a distance. She told me, it was a secret; but she had now their permission to tell me what it was, and then informed me of the whole affair.

I was commanded in the evening to attend them at the Lodge, where I spent the evening; the happiness of being with them not a little increased by seeing the fulness of joy that appeared in every countenance. This important affair has taken up so much of my paper, as well as my thoughts, that I can add but little more to it. Soon after this, Princess Elizabeth's illness cast a damp on all this joy, but I thank God she seems now restored to that health which every one who knows her must wish on her own account (as well as many others) to possess. She is still delicate, and does not attend them at the drawing-room when they go to town. Last Friday evening she had the goodness to permit me and Miss Port to spend the evening with her: nothing can be more amiable or more engaging than she is.

My secretary puts me in mind (for I don't know how to send your letters free) that I have no more room left: if I had, and was able to

proceed farther, I should with the greatest satisfaction yield to the dictates of my inclination. — Continue, my dear friend, your kind representations of me to all my dear friends in Ireland, and believe me,

Ever most faithfully yours,

M. DELANY.

LETTER XV.

To Mrs. Frances Hamilton.

Windsor, December 25th, 1786.

As delays are dangerous, I will not defer seizing the first opportunity of thanking you, my dear friend, for your most excellent and kind letter, dated November 27th. I feel all your enjoyments, and wish you a long continuance of them, blessing, as you are blessed. My health, or rather my strength, is fluctuating like the weather; but upon the whole in such a state as I ought to be very thankful for. Since my writing of this, I have had a visit from my nephew, Mr. B. Dewes, from Bath, where he is ordered for the recovery of his health, and, I thank God, has found great benefit from it. He brought me a letter from

Mrs. Preston *, full of kindness, and wishing to see me. — Whatever interruptions may have happened in the course of our long acquaintance, I never can forget the happiness and cordial love I have ever borne to root and branch of that delightful society.

When Governor H. H. made me a visit here, he told me there was something in agitation for his establishment, and I hope it is accomplished, though I have heard no particulars about it. I believe (if report has not done it for me) you know nothing of my flights to Kew, which is about ten miles from this place. The royal family once a fortnight take Kew in their way to London; they leave Windsor on Tuesday, and return on Saturday. Their Majesties were so gracious as to hint a wish of my spending some days at Kew when they were there, and to make it completely agreeable and commodious, engaged Mr. and Mrs. Smelt, who live there, to invite me to *their house*, a pleasure of *itself*, that would have given

* Mary, youngest daughter of the Hon. Henry Hamilton, son of Gustavus, Viscount Boyne.

me wings for the undertaking; and accordingly I availed myself of the command of one, and the invitation of the other, and spent part of two weeks there. I think you can hardly be a stranger to the character of Mr. Smelt, a man that has the honour of being friend to the King, and testified to the world by his disinterested and steady behaviour, how worthy he is of such a distinction. His character is that of the most noble and delicate kind, and deserves the pen of a Clarendon to do justice to it. Mrs. Smelt is a very sensible, friendly, agreeable woman. Their house is convenient and elegant, situated upon the banks of the Thames, open to all its beauties, and guarded from all its inconveniences, and within a short walk from thence to the Royal Lodge, and they are visited more than once a day by Their Majesties or some of the royal family; which pleasure I had the honour of partaking. We were appointed to dine every day at Miss Burney's table, at the Lodge, which we did almost every day. It is very magnificent, and the society very agreeable: about eight or ten persons, belonging to Their Majesties. Coffee was ready about six

o'clock, which was immediately after dinner: about seven the King generally walked into the room, addressing every body with the most delightful condescension, and after that, commanded me and Mrs. Smelt to follow him into the Queen's apartment, where we drank tea, and stayed till near ten o'clock. It is impossible to describe the pleasure and satisfaction such a society bestowed. Princess Elizabeth, who, I thank God, is now perfectly restored to health, was not well enough at that time to make one of that society, so that her sisters took their turns of being with her. Ever since the last excursion I made there, the weather has been too bad for me to venture again, and has, indeed, so much shaken my frame, that I find it necessary not to run any hazard: indeed, were I inclined to do it, my dear and noble friends will not allow me, but make it up to me by permitting me to enjoy as much of their company as they can.

I have fixed my time for going to London, the 12th of January, to settle for a few months. Miss Burney is very happy in her situation; much admired; in great esteem with every body

round her, which will still increase as she is more known. It is doing me too much honour to say, that I placed her there; but, as I believe I told you before, it was her own merits, and the Queen's great penetration that preferred her.

I had a glimpse of Mrs. Sandford on her road from Bath to London, about two months ago. She was not well enough to make me a visit at Windsor, which I was sorry for; but I hear she is now pretty well, and happy in her sons' being every thing one can wish them to be. I hear but an indifferent account of our poor friend, Mrs. Vesey; Mrs. Handcock is pretty well. Now, my dear friend, I must conclude with my requesting you to believe me, truly,

Affectionately yours,

M. DELANY.

I must add my wishes for your enjoyment of a merry Christmas, and many happy new years.

LETTER XVI.

To Mrs. Frances Hamilton.

St. James's Place, April 3. 1787.

BEFORE this, my dear friend must have heard of the bad state of health I have been in ever since the beginning of January, as your most kind letter, dated February the 9th, mentions nothing of it. I came to town, with a very bad fever upon me, the 10th of January; which fasting, and twice bleeding, did not conquer, though it abated enough for me to take the journey. I was then seized with a degree of putrid sore throat, at which I was not so much alarmed as those that were about me; that was succeeded by a violent defluxion, and the fever

still continuing, for near two months. I thank God, Dr. Turton's skill, as well as my apothecary Mr. Young's attention, answered the wishes of my friends; and I am now, though not so well as before this illness, better than I could have expected. I am rather weak than low: much is expected from settled good weather when it comes. I ought not to repine at what I have suffered; it was the will of God it should be so, and I am most truly sensible of many advantages from it; and my heart is full of gratitude, the most delightful of all sensations, for the tender and constant attention of the friends I value from the highest to the lowest. If I had strength of spirits to communicate to you in this manner the unremitting honours and favours I have received from my royal friends, it would be a mutual gratification to us both; but that I do not find myself equal to.

I thought this account would be more satisfactory to you, than any you could receive from any other hand: it has made me take the first opportunity of writing. I must add my best acknowledgments for the particular account you give me of yourself and the rest of my dear

friends in Ireland. Believe me ever faithfully
and

Affectionately yours,

M. DELANY.

To convince you I am now in a fair way of doing well, I must tell you that Miss Port left me this morning to meet her mother at Wells-bourn, and is to return to me in a fortnight or three weeks: at which time I have thoughts of settling at Windsor. When this letter began, I was in hopes I should have been able to have filled it. Governor Hamilton is well: I have been able to see him twice.

LETTER XVII.

To Mrs. Frances Hamilton.

Windsor, May 17. 1787.

I THOUGHT it would be more satisfactory to you, my dear friend, when I could inform you how I bore my journey to Windsor: I therefore deferred answering your kind and agreeable letter to this time. I am infinitely obliged to you for your good intelligence of my few remaining friends in Ireland, and for your good offices between me and them, and beg their continuance.

If I undertook to be particular upon a subject so dear to me, it would lead me beyond my strength. Happy should I be, could I comply with your agreeable request of relating all the

marks of favour and increasing kindness I receive from my most noble and condescending friends; they are indeed inexpressible. I came here on Thursday the 10th, but Their Majesties did not come to Windsor till the Saturday following. They called upon me before they went to their own Lodge, accompanied by Princess Royal and Princess Amelia, and made my heart glad to see them look so well and in such good spirits. I was not well enough to venture out in the evening, and, indeed, had company I could not leave, Lady Bute* and Lady Louisa Stewart, her daughter. On Sunday evening I was asked with them to drink tea at the Queen's Lodge, between seven and eight o'clock. There was nobody with them but Lady Pembroke †, the Lady of the Bedchamber in Waiting; and though a circle of the most awful nature, it was far from a painful one: the condescending address and gracious manner of

* Mary, only daughter of Edward Wortley Montague, Esq. by the celebrated Lady Mary Wortley Montague, daughter of Evelyn Pierpoint.

† Elizabeth, daughter of Charles second Duke of Marlborough.

Their Majesties and the Princesses, made it perfectly easy and pleasant. I was dismissed as an invalid at nine o'clock; but the truth is, I believe, the Queen had a mind to indulge me with an hour's conversation with Miss Burney, whose apartment is upon the same floor, and I had the happiness of finding her recovered from a long and dangerous illness. And here again I have a new field to expatiate upon, — on the Queen's great goodness to her, whose attention to her has been that of a tender friend; and Miss Burney now only wants time to restore her to strength and her happy occupation *, which she delights in. As a proof of the wonderful effect of such cordials, I have been able to obey their commands in attending them every day at the Lodge, till yesterday morning, when they went to London again, and I at present feel desolate; but on Saturday next I hope to revive again, and on the Tuesday following expect my niece Granville and my dear Mary Anne †, which, indeed, will be a great comfort to me. I left Mrs.

* As Dresser to Her Majesty.

† Miss Port, her great-niece.

Sandford and her family, I think, very well for *them*: her sons going on with great propriety in their different departments. We always talk of you when we meet, and they never fail to desire I will make their best compliments to you. And now, my dear friend, I must bid you adieu! my head giving me warning that I have dictated a sufficient quantity this morning, and fear you have reason to think so too; but at all times believe me most sincerely

And affectionately yours,

M. DELANY.

LETTER XVIII.

To Mrs. Frances Hamilton.

Windsor, August 11. 1787.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I OWE you so much in the kind interest you take in my health and happiness, that it would be most ungrateful in me did I omit giving you those informations you so kindly desire: but my powers are not always equal to my will, though, upon the whole, I find myself tolerably well: my days are unequal, and I am subject to a languor at times, that makes me unable to dictate. I am infinitely obliged to you for the justice you do me to all my dear friends in Ireland, and for your information about them. Continue your kind offices. I do not know

how to particularise the condescending goodness which I daily experience; and it is a matter of real astonishment to me, so unqualified as I am, and under the load of years and some infirmities, that I should receive so many unremitting marks of favour: but the truth is, the love of giving comfort, and bestowing happiness, seems to predominate in the hearts of my royal friends. At this time of the year the evenings are devoted by them to the Terrace till eight o'clock, when they return to the Lodge to their tea and concert of music: happy are those who are admitted to that circle! The Queen has had the goodness to command me to come to the Lodge, whenever it is quite easy to me to do it, without sending particularly for me, lest it should embarrass me to refuse that honour; so that most evenings, at half-an-hour past seven, I go to Miss Burney's apartment, and when the royal family return from the Terrace, the King, or one of the Princesses (generally the youngest, Princess Amelia, just four years old) come into the room, take me by the hand, and lead me into the drawing-

room, where there is a chair ready for me by the Queen's left hand: the three eldest Princesses sit round the table, and the Ladies in Waiting, Lady Charlotte Finch and Lady Elizabeth Waldegrave. A vacant chair is left for the King, whenever he pleases to sit down in it. Every one is employed with pencil, needle, or knotting. Between the pieces of music the conversation is easy and pleasant; and, for an hour before the conclusion of the whole, the King plays at backgammon with one of his equerries, and I am generally dismissed: I then go to Miss Burney's room again, where Miss Port generally spends the evenings that I am at the Lodge, and has an opportunity of being in very good company there. It will not become me to commend her as much as I believe others do, and I hope she will deserve the approbation she has hitherto met with.

Last Saturday morning Governor Hamilton made me a flying visit; the few of his family he could tell me any thing about (which were Mrs. Preston and her daughters) he gave me a good account of, and that there was likelihood of my

seeing *her* in London before they left England, which will give me great pleasure, though mixed with some painful recollections.

August 13.

I began this on Saturday, but found myself not equal to finish it, but being better in the evening I went to the Lodge, to Miss Burney's apartments; but had not been there a quarter of an hour before the King walked into the room, took me by the hand, and said, "Come along, Mrs. Delany," and led me into the Queen's apartment, and placed me in the chair allotted for me, next to Her Majesty, (which, however, I am indebted to my deafness for,) where I spent two hours, not knowing which gave me most delight, the harmony of the music, or that of the amiable society. The two Princes were there. Yesterday was the Prince of Wales's birthday, and it being Sunday, the entertainment that was to be given was put off till Monday, which was *yesterday*, for here I was interrupted, and am now come to Tuesday the 14th.

The entertainment at the Castle, yesterday, was very superb indeed: there were above a

hundred people of the first rank, Ministers of State, and foreigners invited to come to the Castle. At seven o'clock, and after the Drawing-room was over, and all compliments paid and received on the day, the company were conducted into the music-room, where there was a very fine concert, chiefly of Mr. Handel's music, and most exquisitely performed. When that was over, which was about twelve o'clock, there was a supper prepared in St. George's Hall, which for magnificence exceeded every thing that had been done before. The company were not all dispersed till two o'clock; and are invited again to the same entertainment on Thursday, which is the Duke of York's birthday. The younger part of the company are in hopes of a ball. I went again, yesterday evening, to Miss Burney's apartment, and delighted myself with looking out of the window, which almost fronts the Castle-gate, while Miss Burney and Miss Port went on the terrace, where every body, who were not of consequence to be invited to the Castle, walked; some sighing that they were not within the walls with the *grand monde*; whilst others were blessing them-

selves with enjoying the fine air of Windsor, the evening being very fine. My spirits are now exhausted, and will not suffer me to be as minute in my account as I wish to be for your entertainment, but hope the newspapers will make you amends for my deficiencies. I had a visit last Saturday from Mrs. Mary Henry, and we talked of you, my dear Mrs. F. H., for the greatest part of the time she was with me. The justice she did my excellent friend, was no small gratification to one who is most sincerely and affectionately yours,

M. DELANY.

LETTER XIX.

To Mrs. Frances Hamilton.

London, 13th September, 1787.

I WILL not delay giving you the pleasure I know you must receive, my good friend, from hearing such a account of Mrs. Delany, as I can truly give you, from having spent two hours with her this morning, and will not put off writing even for a day, as fresh intelligence on so very interesting a subject must be most acceptable. I shall name no other, and be as particular as my time and paper will allow. I was with her at nine this morning, and heard (with no small agitation) her well-known foot hastening down to meet me. For a few minutes our meeting was silent; as many circumstances rushed into our minds very affecting

to us both. I dreaded seeing the alteration in her, that was naturally to be expected from twenty years' absence, from the period in her life of, from sixty-seven to eighty-seven; but I was soon set at ease, by seeing the same apprehension, cheerfulness, attention, benevolence, and comfortable enjoyment of every pleasant circumstance in her situation, that you remember in her. Her inquiries, her remarks, her whole conversation, full of life and ingenuity, and that kind heart, and manner of expressing its feelings, as warm as ever. She is as upright, and walks as alertly as when you saw her. In short, I could have had no idea of her being as I saw her in every way. She lets me know when her only spare bed is at liberty, as she insists on having *her child* (as she honoured me by naming me) again in her own house; and I shall instantly obey her summons, with the pleasure you can suppose, but I could not express. Miss Port is a most pleasing girl, with the manners you may suppose Mrs. Delany's *élève* would have, and seems high in favour, and to be extremely attentive and proper towards her aunt. The

King and Queen, and all the younger branches, increase in affection and respect to Mrs. D. She breakfasted with them yesterday, and the King always makes her lean on his arm. Her house is cheerful, and filled with her own charming works. No pictures have held their colours so well. I had time to look over near a volume of her flowers, which are, I think, as exact representations of nature, as those you are acquainted with; she has finished nine hundred and eighty sheets, and regrets that the thousand she intended, wants twenty of its full number. Her inquiries and all she said of you, would have gratified you highly from her lips; but you would think them a little too flattering from my pen. Now, my good friend, repay me for sitting up after a fatiguing day, to communicate this pleasing intelligence to you, by telling me your schemes. * * *

Farewell, and believe me, my good friend,

Yours, very truly,

M. PRESTON.

LETTER XX.

To Mrs. Frances Hamilton.

October, 1787.

* * * * I left Mrs. Delany in perfect health; and, the day before, cut the two profiles I send you; the largest much the likest*, and so much so, the Queen desired one. Mrs. Delany actually went on Wednesday last to Mr. Locke's, twenty-two miles from Windsor, to spend some days. One little anecdote of the Queen struck me, as a stronger instance of her real tender feeling towards our dear old friend, than all her bounties or honours. As soon as the Duchess of Portland died, Mrs. Delany got into a chaise to go to her own house;

* From which the prefixed engraving is taken.

the Duke followed her, begging to know what she would accept of, that belonged to his mother; Mrs. Delany recollected a bird that the Duchess always fed and kept in her own room, desired to have it, and felt towards it as you must suppose. In a few days she got a bad fever, and the bird died; but for some hours she was too ill even to recollect her bird. The Queen had one of the same sort which she valued extremely (a weaver bird); she took it with her own hands, and while Mrs. Delany slept, had the cage brought, and put her own bird into it, charging every one not to let it go so near Mrs. Delany, as that she could perceive the change, till she was enough recovered to bear the loss of her first favourite. This requires no comment, as it speaks strongly for itself. * * * * * * * *

I must now write to my dear Lady de V.; so, with the affectionate wishes of this house,
Bid you farewell.

M. PRESTON.

LETTER XXI.

To Mrs. Frances Hamilton.

London, St. James's Place, January 18th, 1788.

I FLATTER myself that my dear friend will think it long since she heard from me, at the same time I will do her kind heart justice that she has not blamed me for it. I have often prepared myself to do it, and have as often been interrupted. Airing when the weather would permit me, and many kind neighbours that call often upon me in a morning, have partly occasioned my silence, and at times when I had more leisure, I have not been well enough to dictate. I came to town the beginning of this week: my illustrious neighbours have also removed to their

winter-quarters, which makes me less regret my leaving Windsor : and, indeed, as I cannot enjoy my old friends (that reside here) when I am there, it makes me support what now is a melancholy home to me, as recollection brings back the happy hours that made this situation dear to me. My niece is now of an age to be indulged with those amusements, which are reasonable at her time of life ; and, indeed, I think her worthy of all my care. And now I know, my dear friend, you wish for some little anecdotes concerning my intercourse with those who do me so much honour as to continue their partiality and indulgence to me : calling on me if I am confined at any time, and allowing me the great privilege and happiness of attending them when I am able, every evening at the Queen's Lodge, which is generally two or three times in the week ; and by that means, I have an opportunity of seeing my amiable and much esteemed friend Miss Burney, whenever I go there, and when I cannot go, she is permitted to come to me : but now I know this does not satisfy, and you want me to be more particular. The most extraordinary

account I can give of myself is, my having made a visit to Mr. and Mrs. Locke, at Norbury Park, about thirty miles from Windsor, in the month of October, — very particular friends of Miss Burney's. Their characters, their dwelling, their manner of living, and their extraordinary qualifications want the pen of the author of *Cecilia* to do justice to: it is like entering into a new planet. Mr. Locke is esteemed one of the most perfect characters living. His lady's outward form and amiable disposition are truly angelical. They have two sons and three daughters, all beautiful; most rationally and elegantly educated. The eldest son, Mr. William Locke, is the first genius of the age, for drawing. My niece and I spent four days there very agreeably, and, I thank God, though a bold undertaking, it agreed very well with me. The day before I intended to leave Windsor, when Mary Anne* and I were set down to our little dinner, one simple dish of veal-collops, without any notice, the Queen walked into the dining-room, and said, I must

* Miss Port.

not be angry with my servant, for she would come in, and that my dinner smelt so well, she would partake of it with me. I was both delighted and confused with the honour conferred upon me. Miss Port very readily resigned her place, and became our attendant. The Queen honoured my humble board, not only by partaking of it, (which she did to make me go on with *my dinner*;) but commended it very much. Soon after the clock struck four, Her Majesty said she would resign her place; for she came to see me on purpose to prevent my venturing out in the evening, lest I should catch cold before my journey. I am now in the midst of unpacking, and receiving the visits and kind enquiries of my London friends, so that I hardly know what I write; but I could not let the new year run on farther, without wishing you, my dear Mrs. F. Hamilton, many happy returns of it. Though I have not in form thanked you for your very kind letter received so long ago, you cannot doubt my gratitude; and of my being unalterably, most affectionately yours,

M. DELANY.

Miss Port begs I will add her compliments. — I was much gratified in having Mrs. Preston's company for a few days at Windsor, and in talking about dear Irish friends ; to whom I am sure you will always do me justice. — All my family are well. I have just heard that Lord Aylesbury * has made proposals to Lady Anne Rawdon — a match approved of by every body.

* Thomas Bruce Brudenell, K. T. Treasurer to the Queen ; married, February 14th, 1788, Anne Rawdon, eldest daughter of John, first Earl of Moira.

LETTER XXII.

To Mrs. Frances Hamilton.

St. James's Place, Thursday, 17th April, 1788.

ON what a grievous occasion am I compelled to address my beloved Aunt Delany's dear Mrs. F. Hamilton! — Oh! Madam, she is no more! On Tuesday, the 15th, she expired, at eleven o'clock at night, but without the smallest struggle or suffering. God be praised! — On Sunday, the 6th of April, she was first seized with a violent fever. — I have, with the greatest difficulty, composed myself sufficiently to send this sad, this heart-rending intelligence, — and can say no more, than that, were it not for the assurance I have of her felicity, I think it would not be possible for me to exist.

GEORGINA MARIANNE PORT.

THE END.



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